

the cultural, spiritual, linguistic, and kinship bonds that have existed for millennia.

As we reflect on the heritage of American Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians, we also reaffirm our commitment to fostering a prosperous future for native youth and children. At the foundation of these efforts is our work to provide a quality education to all Native American children. In particular, we have sought significantly increased funding to support Bureau of Indian Affairs school construction and 1,000 new teachers for American Indian youth. My 1998 Executive order on American Indian and Alaska Native Education sets goals to improve high school completion rates and improve performance in reading and mathematics. And we are working to get computers into every classroom and to expand the use of educational technology.

We are also seeking ways to empower Native American communities and help them prosper. My Administration is expanding consultation and collaborative decision-making with tribal governments to promote self-determination. We also support tribal government economic development initiatives, particularly those that increase or enhance the infrastructure necessary for long-term economic growth. My New Markets Initiative seeks to leverage public and private investment to boost economic development in areas that have not shared in our recent national prosperity. In July, I visited the Pine Ridge Reservation of the Oglala Sioux, as part of my New Markets Tour, to explore opportunities for economic development in Indian Country.

Among the most serious barriers to economic growth facing tribal communities is a lack of housing, physical infrastructure, and essential services. My Administration is working with tribal leaders to build and renovate affordable housing on tribal lands, bring quality drinking water to economically distressed Indian communities, and improve public safety. We are moving to assist tribal governments in developing the physical infrastructure needed for economic development, including roads, fiber-optic cabling, and electric power lines.

In working together to shape a brighter future for Indian Country, we must not lose

sight of the rich history of Native Americans. Just weeks ago, the Smithsonian Institution broke ground on the National Mall for the National Museum of the American Indian. This wonderful facility will preserve and celebrate the art, history, and culture of America's indigenous peoples. It is also fitting that the first U.S. dollar coin of the new millennium will bear the likeness of Sacajawea and her infant son—an image that captures the importance of our shared history.

Now, Therefore, I, William J. Clinton, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim November 1999 as National American Indian Heritage Month. I urge all Americans, as well as their elected representatives at the Federal, State, local, and tribal levels, to observe this month with appropriate programs, ceremonies, and activities.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this first day of November, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-nine, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-fourth.

William J. Clinton

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NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on November 4.

Remarks at a Ceremony Honoring the Memory of Yitzhak Rabin in Oslo *November 2, 1999*

Your Majesties, Prime Minister and Mrs. Bondevik, Mr. Mayor, President Ahtisaari, Shimon Peres, Prime Minister Barak, Chairman Arafat, Leah Rabin, ladies and gentlemen, today we bear witness to the wisdom of the Psalm which says, "the righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance." We honor a righteous man whose memory is everlasting, because he devoted his life to the security of his country but gave his life to the promise of peace.

Yitzhak Rabin's life was a lesson, teaching us that old fears and suspicions and hatreds

can, in fact, be overcome—for he would be the first to remind us that he felt all those things, too, but he let them go—teaching us that there could be no security without lasting peace and no peace without charity for all and malice toward none, teaching us that the only final answer to violence is reconciliation.

Almost 7 years ago, those principles brought Israelis and Palestinians to this city of peace to find common ground. And today our friend brings us back to Oslo. We can almost hear his kind, but stern voice telling us, “Well, this is all very nice, but if you really want to honor me, finish the job.” He would be pleased to see Israel’s cause represented by Prime Minister Barak, his friend, fellow soldier, and fervent ally for peace.

In his last hour, Yitzhak Rabin, who was a shy person in public, sang to a peace-loving throng of Israelis the *Shir Ha Shalom*, the “Song of Peace.” Its words sing out to us today: Don’t say the day will come; make it come. Today, in honor of our friend and leader, we must all say we will make it come—a new day of peace that is more than the absence of war; a new day of tolerance and respect, of trust and shared destiny, when the fears of the past are released so that the hands and heart are free to embrace the promise of the future.

The enemies of peace remain alive and active. Even in this day we see their dark work. But the Scripture reminds us that evil can be overcome by good, and only by good. So we pursue Yitzhak Rabin’s vision not only because we loved and admired him—although we surely did—but because it is right and the only way.

We have now a chance, but only a chance, to bring real and lasting peace between Israel and her neighbors. If we let it slip away, all will bear the consequences: Israel still trapped within a circle of hostility; the Palestinians still saddled with poverty and frustration and pain; both—and their Arab neighbors wrapped in an endless and pointless cycle of conflict.

So if Rabin were here with us today, he would say there is not a moment to spare; “All this honoring me and these nice words, they’re very nice, but please finish the job.”

The way ahead will be full of challenges for the Israelis, the Palestinians, the Syrians, the Lebanese, for the friends of peace here represented. President Mubarak and King Abdullah will be important to our efforts. I am determined that the United States will do all we can, including living up to the commitments we made at Wye River. But the most important thing we can do today is to say to our friend, Rabin, we can still hear you; we are prepared to finish the job.

When President Kennedy was assassinated, Abba Eban said, “Tragedy is the difference between what is and what might have been.” That is the way we felt in the months and years after Prime Minister Rabin was killed. Today let us say together we are done with tragedy. We will close the gap between what is and what might have been.

The other night my wife had to the White House one of the great scientists in our country, who is unlocking the mysteries of the human gene. And he said to us the most astonishing thing—he said all humanity, genetically, are 99.9 percent the same. And if you get any group, ethnic group, together—100 Norwegians—with another ethnic group—100 west Africans—you find that the genetic differences among individuals within each group are greater than the genetic profile of differences between the Norwegians and the Africans. Think of that.

Think of all the bodies that have been piled up, one after another, the young and the old, throughout human history in tribute to that one-tenth of one percent difference. Think about what brings us here today—that the greatest quality a human being can have is the ability to reach beyond that last one-tenth of one percent to unite in the common humanity of the other 99.9 percent.

Yitzhak Rabin led us in that great reach out—reaching across the last divide of one-tenth of one percent. It was his greatness. It is his lesson. It is his message to us today. Let us hear him, even as we loved him.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:50 a.m. in the Main Hall at City Hall. In his remarks, he referred to Prime Minister Kjell Magne Bondevik of Norway and his wife, Bjorg; Mayor Per Ditlev-Simonsen of Oslo; President Martti Ahtisaari of Finland; former Prime Minister Shimon Peres and

current Prime Minister Ehud Barak of Israel; Chairman Yasser Arafat of the Palestinian Authority; Leah Rabin, widow of Yitzhak Rabin; President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt; and King Abdullah II of Jordan.

Remarks Prior to Discussions With Prime Minister Ehud Barak of Israel and Chairman Yasser Arafat of the Palestinian Authority and an Exchange With Reporters in Oslo

November 2, 1999

Middle East Peace Process

The President. I think I can speak for all of us when I say, first, we're very grateful to the Government of Norway for inviting us here for this important ceremony. And we now have to give some real energy to the framework talks, but I think even though the issues are difficult, the will is strong, and we're off to a good start.

Q. How do you see the strong focus, Mr. President, on the issue of the settlement?

The President. I think that the less we say now to the public and the more we work in private, the better off we'll be and the more likely we will be able to get an agreement.

Q. —a summit in January or February in Washington, or maybe in Camp David?

The President. I wouldn't—I don't think we should rule it out or in. We ought to make sure—see how much progress we can make between now and then. You know, I would do anything I could to help them.

Q. What is the main issue you will discuss right now when you start negotiations?

The President. I think we just have to talk about—to get agreement on the ground rules, how we're going to proceed.

NOTE: The exchange began at 5:45 p.m. in the U.S. Ambassador's residence. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.

Statement on House Action on the Proposed "African Growth and Opportunity Act"

November 2, 1999

Today's vote is an important milestone in our effort to build a new economic relationship with sub-Saharan Africa and deepen ties with our Caribbean and Central American neighbors. This legislation will help increase trade, enhance opportunity, and boost economic growth in America and nations in Africa, the Caribbean, and Central America. I urge the Senate to pass this bill as soon as possible.

Statement on the Cyclone in India

November 2, 1999

On behalf of all Americans, Hillary and I offer our deepest condolences to the families who lost loved ones to the devastating cyclone that struck eastern India Friday and Saturday. It is gradually becoming clear just how much destruction was wrought along the seacoast and inland in those terrifying hours. There are reports that thousands of lives were lost and hundreds of thousands of homes were destroyed. It is truly a national calamity.

Our hearts go out to the Indian people, and we are prepared to do what we can to help. The Government of India has an immense task ahead in providing assistance to the people who were affected by this tragedy. The United States Government is providing more than \$2 million worth of food and \$100,000 worth of tents and plastic sheeting to help alleviate the hunger and immediate suffering. I also encourage the American people to help through charities involved in international relief.